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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4452
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0707

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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [FR](#) [NG](#)

SUBJECT: NIGER: GOVERNMENT SUSPENDS MSF-FRANCE OPERATIONS

¶1. (U) The Nigerien Interior Ministry in a decree dated July 18 suspended the operations of Medecins Sans Frontieres-France (MSF-F) in Niger.

¶2. (SBU) In a July 29 meeting with the DCM, the head of the French chapter of MSF in Niger, Emmanuel Lavieville, explained that, contrary to press reports, the decree did not specify either the national chapter of MSF suspended, or the region where the suspension applies. Informally, however, MSF-France understands that the decree applies only to it, and not to the other MSF chapters operating in Niger. Lavieville explained that 98 percent of MSF-France's activities are in the Maradi region, and the other 2 percent are in Agadez. The Maradi program focuses on combating malnutrition. It also works on health issues such as meningitis, measles and malaria. The GON forced MSF-France to suspend its Agadez program last fall after three MSF-F vehicles were stolen in a short time frame, which the GON considered "voluntary imprudence" on MSF-F's part. Speculation at the time was that the GON believed that the vehicles had been taken by the rebel group MNJ, with possible MSF-F complicity. MSF-F resumed its Agadez operations about three months ago.

¶3. (SBU) Lavieville said that the GON did not give a reason for the suspension, and MSF has not formally asked for one. He noted that relations between MSF-F and the GON have been strained since at least the 2005 food crises, as well as GON suspicions that MSF-F sympathized with the MNJ. He speculated that the event that may have triggered the suspension was MSF-F's recent receipt of a large financial contribution from an Emerite-based organization, which the Ministry of Public Health may have thought should have gone through it.

¶4. (SBU) After receipt of the Interior Ministry decree, MSF-F immediately suspended its preventative activities in Maradi and is shutting down its curative activities over 3-4 weeks. On July 25 MSF-F requested a meeting for its President with the Nigerien President and Prime Minister, through the Nigerien Embassy in Paris.

ALLEN